

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT WITH VOLUNTEERS PROJECT PROPOSALS

Refuge: Sheldon-Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Name of Project: Control of Invasive Non-native Horses and Burros

Total amount requested: \$14,700

Project Description:

Invasive Species Treatment, Control, and/or Restoration: The primary objective of the project is to establish a volunteer program organized by a four-person work crew for monitoring, repair, and replacement of fences along the exterior boundaries of Hart Mountain NAR and Sheldon NWR to prevent future invasion and re-population of non-native horses and burros from surrounding public and private lands. The intent will be short-term until Sheldon NWR can secure funds and staff needed to complete regular annual maintenance of boundary fences.

Feral horses and burros were eradicated from Hart Mountain Refuge in the 1990's and we anticipate feral horse and burro eradication efforts at Sheldon Refuge will be completed in 2014. The total cost to the Service and other partners from these efforts is in excess of several million dollars. In addition, the Service has spent more than \$400,000 since 2010 to repair and replace exterior refuge boundary fences to sufficiently prevent repopulation. It is now imperative these fences be monitored and maintained more regularly, and at least annually, to protect the success of past efforts and to prevent horse and burros from establishing new populations within the refuges which would adversely impact important resources including Greater sage-grouse habitats, pronghorn, and wilderness. Currently, the Sheldon-Hart Mtn. NWR Complex does not have adequate staffing or funding to complete this work.

Public Outreach and/or Environmental Education: A secondary objective for the project is to raise public awareness of the threats to refuge resources from horses and burros and build public support for our continued efforts to control these invasive, non-native species through volunteer work in which progress, accomplishment, and reward is immediately apparent and measurable.

Friends Groups and other Volunteers: Friends of Nevada Wilderness has partnered with the Service to complete a number of volunteer projects within refuges across Nevada, including Sheldon NWR. Friends of Nevada Wilderness has successfully hosted several volunteer events and maintained a four person work crew on Sheldon Refuge conducting habitat restoration and removal of abandoned fence and livestock developments during the summers of 2011, 2012 and 2013. The group has pledged their support for this project and will commit staff time, equipment, and whatever matching funding they can secure to ensure success.

Other Partners: The Greater Hart Sheldon Conservation Fund has contributed more than \$500,000 toward the removal of feral horses and burros and financially supported efforts by Friends of Nevada Wilderness to restore important habitats and wilderness values of Sheldon NWR. The Fund's Board has expressed support for this project and we fully anticipate they will continue to contribute matching funds as they have in the past.

Criteria for Project Success: In order for this project to be successful it must enable Friends of Nevada Wilderness to host at least two volunteer weekend events, repair at least four of the eight remaining fence deficiencies which have been documented along the boundary of Sheldon Refuge and complete monitoring and minor repair of no less than 75 miles (1/3) of the exterior boundary fence.

Budget (see Attachment 1):

Comment [BF1]: So, you're saying that just by having volunteers there, you will improve public outreach and environmental education?

Attachment 1: Preliminary Budget for Control of non-native horses and burros

Budget for Invasive Horse and Burro Control (based on 2013 expenditures for similar volunteer and work crew projects)	Sheldon Refuge Contributed Funds & In-kind Support	Greater Hart-Sheldon Fund Contribution	Invasive Species Project Funds	
Equipment, tools, and supplies	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500	
Vehicles and Travel	\$17,000	\$11,500	\$1,700	
Meals and Lodging	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	
Friends of Nevada Wilderness staff and seasonal employees.	\$0	\$23,200	\$6,000	
Total	\$24,000	\$39,200	\$14,700	\$77,900